

Brown-Butter Orzo with Butternut Squash*
[This Creamy Fall Orzo Will Please Anyone Who Loves A Cozy Porridge,](#)

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Yield: 4 Servings
Time: 45 Minutes

INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup thinly sliced shallots (2 to 3), or use onion or leek
1 small (2-pound) butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes (3 cups)
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage leaves, or 2 teaspoons chopped rosemary or marjoram, plus more for serving if you like
1 teaspoon fine sea salt or table salt, plus more as needed
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more for serving
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red-pepper flakes, plus more for serving
3 cups vegetable stock or chicken stock
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup uncooked orzo
1 lemon, zested and halved
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole-milk ricotta (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In a medium Dutch oven, or a large (12-inch) skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Cook, swirling occasionally, until the foam subsides, the milk solids turn golden brown and it smells nutty and toasty, 3 to 4 minutes. (Watch carefully to see that it doesn't burn.)
2. Stir in shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly softened, about 2 minutes. Add squash, sage, a large pinch of salt, the $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper and the $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red-pepper flakes, and cook until squash is golden at the edges and begins to soften, 12 to 17 minutes.
3. Add stock and bring to a simmer. Stir in orzo, lemon zest and the 1 teaspoon salt. Cover the pan and simmer over medium-low heat until orzo is just tender and most of the liquid is absorbed, 14 to 18 minutes, stirring once or twice. If the pan dries out before the orzo and squash are tender, add a splash or two of water.
4. Remove pan from heat and stir in Parmesan. Taste and add more salt if needed, and a squeeze of lemon juice if the dish needs brightness. Dollop with ricotta if using, and sprinkle with more grated Parmesan and black pepper just before serving, garnishing the top with more red-pepper flakes and sage.

*I prepared this recipe using 1-1/2 cups Arborio rice. I added about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of white wine the butternut squash as it cooked.

The rice took a little longer to cook than the time stated above. Also, I poured the 3 cups of stock in a once and stirred it vigorously each time so the rice would release its starches. An additional cup of stock was needed to cook the rice.